

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY Albania

REPORT

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1. All prisons in Albania are over-crowded. Fourteen prisoners are usually placed in cells which formerly held four. All of the prisoners sleep on the floor and each prisoner has a space of two meters by 60 cms. Each must provide his own sleeping equipment and his ration is only 800 gms. of bread a day. Those prisoners who will be tortured sometimes go without eating or sanitary facilities for weeks; this treatment is meted out to ordinary prisoners as well as political prisoners. In addition, political prisoners are assigned to work draining swamps, constructing canals and building irrigation projects. Common prisoners do not work. The following marshes have been drained by political prisoners: the Maliq Lake, the swamps of Korce, Bidei and Kavaje, and the swamps of the village of Jube, 15 kms. north of Durres. More than 2,500 persons working in these areas have died from hunger, fatigue, torture and malaria, including many Catholic priests.
2. The most important prisons are the old prison of Shkoder in the center of the city, next to the Prefecture (Kometet Prethit) and the Franciscan convent next to the church in the center of Shkoder. Most of the political prisoners are concentrated in Burrel (Mati). They are condemned either to life or 20 years imprisonment. Koco Kotta, former President of the Council during the regime of King Zog, died here as a result of torture. This prison is closely guarded because it is near the Yugoslav border. There are two prisons in Tirana: the old prison, located in the center of the city, which is reserved for political prisoners and holds 600 prisoners. The second is the new prison which is located behind the technical school, 200 meters south of the Caraka railroad station; it

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has about 1,000 prisoners. There are two prisons in Durres: one is located in the Venetian walls opposite the tobacco factory and the Hotel Volga; it holds 300 prisoners. The second is located almost at the edge of Durres along the road which leads to Porto Romano; it holds 300 prisoners. Msgr. Vincenzo Prenusi, bishop of Durres, died in this prison in 1948. In order to humiliate him, they forced him to go through the streets with a wheelbarrow begging for bread. In the prison at Elbasan there are 400 prisoners. There are about 350 political prisoners in the prison at Vlone, which is located in the center of the city. The famous patriot Qazim Kokoshi died here after being tortured. His son, Katash Kokoshi, is still being held here. The prison at Gjinokaster is located in a castle and is considered the worst in Albania. There are about 450 political and common prisoners in the prison located in Korce.

3. The camp at Gjinokaster is located south of the city. It is surrounded by a wire fence and holds about 500 prisoners, including the families of political refugees. These people are usually arrested 24 hours after the flight of the refugee is known. If a person goes near the fence at night he is struck by the guards without any warning. The barracks are made of wood and generally do not have floors. The prisoners receive 400 grams of bread and watery soup twice a day. Men and women, including the sick and weak, are forced to work ten hours a day and in the summer they work twelve hours; they are not paid anything. There are about 100 guards, who carry rifles and automatic small arms. In the camp at Tepelene it is said that there are more than 100 prisoners. The prisoners are often entire families sometimes consisting of as many as ten persons. These are the families of escapees; every year a few of them are liberated when it is learned that the escapee has died or it is established that he is not and has never engaged in activity against Communism. The food and treatment are the same as that at Gjinokaster. The prison is built of wood and very few of the windows have panes; the mortality rate among prisoners is high. The Kamsi camp near Tirana is located two kms. west of the city, not far from the Tirana-Durres road. The barracks are built of wood and hold about 1,000 persons; it is surrounded by a wire fence. Prisoners are assigned to labor on the State-owned farm at Kamsi. They are not paid and receive the same treatment as in other camps.
4. Approximately 2,000 Greek Communist refugees, the majority of whom are men ranging from 20-50 years old and women ranging from 20-40 years who participated in the guerrilla war in Greece, are concentrated at a farm in the village of Sukth. This village is located about five kms. north of Shjakau (sic) on the edge of the road leading to Tirana. Part of the farm is located on the right-hand side of the road but most of its buildings are located on the left. Some of the refugees have been wounded or are invalids; those who are fit to work are employed on the farm and are paid the same as the Albanians. They are guarded by the police and are not allowed to come into contact with the Albanians because in the village of Shjak-Sakth (sic) and its environs about 90 per cent of the population is anti-Communist. Many of the Greeks and all of the children have been transported to an unknown destination on Soviet ships which they boarded at night in Durres.

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